APPENDIX 1

Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Youth Development and National Service

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

2020 -2025

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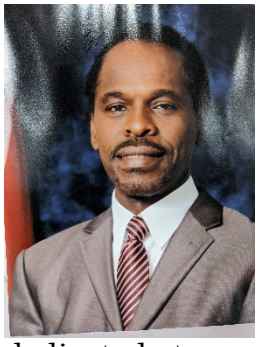
Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to present the National Youth Policy for Trinidad and Tobago (2020-2025), which encapsulates guiding principles for the advancement of our youth development agenda and the progress of our nation's youth.

Over the years, the youth development agenda was aligned to various Government Ministries and Agencies, however, this distinctive and crucial responsibility now fittingly resides with the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS). This Ministry is dedicated to supporting our youth and integrating them into the sustainable developmental landscape of Trinidad and Tobago.

We are now presented with a profound opportunity to partner with key stakeholders - both in the private and public sectors - to consolidate our strengths, identify opportunities for innovation and transformation and implement strategies to advance our nation's youth. The synergism of resources will cohesively work to steer our youth, who represent approximately forty per cent (40%) of our population, on a path to excellence and distinction.

The National Youth Policy of Trinidad and Tobago (2020-2025) is a representation of the voices of youth groups and youth-serving organisations nationwide. It was framed following extensive consultations and guided by several existing policy frameworks.

The vision behind this new Policy is to empower and strategically engage our diverse youth population, as co-creators of sustainable development initiatives. It also takes into consideration, post-pandemic recovery and envisages youth development as a top priority. Young people need to be nurtured and be confident in knowing that their hopes and dreams, despite their race, gender, educational background, physical ability, religion or social status, can be facilitated through the Ministry and its strategic partners. Hence this Policy envisions the application of carefully curated and integrated plans to address the diverse needs of our youth and form part of their "safety net".

This Policy is underpinned by eight (8) strategic priorities for youth development, all focussed on enhancing the quality of life for our young men and women. Ultimately, the work of the Ministry is driven by the need to address the socio-economic concerns of the youth population so that they can realise their fullest potential.

The increased use of technology, as outlined in the Roadmap to Recovery, as well as the implementation of initiatives targeting our youth, are strategies aimed at ensuring our young people contribute to the sustainable development of Trinidad and Tobago. To implement these, require improvement in our databases to better capture our youth population, sound investments, firm commitment and accountability by those in

leadership positions. This is a daunting task, but one that we are committed to holding by the reins, as we guide young people to the forefront.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) and the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service remain steadfast in our commitment to youth, and will continue to play a crucial role in the successful life cycle of future generations and the leadership of our twin-island Republic.

The safety of our youth has always been vested in the hands of the family and extended family members, inclusive of neighbours and teachers. While this type of nurturing is still fundamental, it has been transformed considerably, driving the Government to assume greater responsibility for the care of our youth.

My fellow citizens, the radical change we wish to see for our youth will not be achieved overnight or done in isolation. It is imperative that all players and stakeholders highlighted in the Policy - parents, guardians, teachers, private and public sectors, FBOs and NGOs - join this movement and contribute to the upward mobility of our youth.

We at the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service, anticipate your partnership in implementing the objectives of this new National Youth Policy (2020-2025), and are poised, primed and ready to realise our Vision ***"to be a dynamic, customer-oriented and policy-driven organisation that brings all stakeholders together to promote youth development, and encourage civic-minded citizens to contribute to National Service across Trinidad and Tobago".***

Fitzgerald E. Hinds
Minister of Youth Development and National Service

Abbreviations

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BMC	Baseboard Management Controllers
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CCYD	CARICOM Commission on Youth Development
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CFYR	Communities, Families and Youth Resilience
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CYA	CARICOM Youth Ambassador
CYDAP	Caribbean Community Youth Development Action Plan
CYLS	Caribbean Youth Leaders' Summit
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
EDGE	Economic Dividends for Gender Equality
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GYDI	Global Youth Development Index
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICT	Information Computer Technologies
KI	Key Informants
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management Information Systems
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise
MYDNS	Ministry of Youth Development and National Service
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NYC	National Youth Council
NYPTT	National Youth Policy of Trinidad and Tobago
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAYE	Plan of Action for Youth Employment (Commonwealth)
PLWD	Persons Living with Disabilities
PYD	Positive Youth Development
SEM	Social-Ecological Model
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UWI	University of the West Indies
WHO	World Health Organization
WPAY	World Programme of Action on Youth, 2000 and Beyond
YAPA	Youth Apprenticeship Programme in Agriculture

YPLWD	Young People Living with Disabilities
YPOS	Youth Policy and Operational Strategy

Glossary of Terms

Terms	Definitions
Active Participation	Active participation is a concept which supports the engagement of young people as development partners and values their contribution to their personal, family and community well-being. It is about ensuring young people's fullest participation in the civic and democratic life of their community. Active Participation is grounded in both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
Asset-Based Approach	The asset-based approach focuses on young people as assets in transforming their circumstances. It is rights-based in prioritizing young people's agency in defining and shaping social, political, and economic agendas, including ensuring equality for youth.[i]
Community Development	Community development is the facilitated process by which individuals, local organizations, and institutions, become empowered and assume responsibility by their collective and deliberate actions, for the spaces in which they live, work and play. It is also considered a method, a strategy or an approach that brings about change through the initiation of projects that are responsive to community needs.[ii],[iii]
Deficit-based Approach	An approach that tends to focus on problems in people or to help people avoid risks associated with adverse outcomes. These risk-based interventions do not sustain change.
Diversity	Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. It includes empowering people through respecting and appreciating what makes them different for example in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, education, and national origin.[iv]
Empowerment	Empowerment is an educational, attitudinal, and cultural process supported by appropriate structures which allow young people to acquire the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions, change their own lives and influence lives of others.

Terms	Definitions
Human Rights-based Approach	A human rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards. This approach is operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems, redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.[v]
Inclusion	Inclusion is an organizational effort and practice in which different groups or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and welcomed, and equally treated.[vi1]
Positive Youth Development	PYD is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.[vii]
Safe Spaces	Safe space is a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.
Sustainable Development	Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.[viii]
Youth Development	Youth development is seen as enhancing the status of young people, empowering them to build on their competencies and capabilities for life. It will enable them to contribute to and benefit from a politically stable, economically viable, and legally supportive environment, ensuring their full participation as active citizens in their countries.

Executive Summary

The National Youth Policy (2020-2025) of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is informed by the findings of several stages of community consultations, key informant stakeholder surveys and interviews, desk and peer reviews, focus group discussions with youth, youth leaders, representatives of youth serving organizations and civil society as well a National Youth Survey to assess the situation of youth in Trinidad and Tobago. The policy has also benefitted from pertinent aspects of the emerging global youth and policy development discourse, both regionally and internationally.

The National Youth Policy (2020-2025) espouses a human rights-based approach to youth development that emphasises the intersectional needs and priorities of young people between ages 10 to 35 years of age. This is an essential tool to support the mainstreaming of youth development priorities across Trinidad and Tobago's development landscape. The policy is underpinned by the core principles of gender equality and equity, respect for diversity, social inclusion, youth heterogeneity and intersectionality as well as inclusive and active participation.

The National Youth Policy aims to:

- **Mainstream** youth priorities across all development sectors
- Promote **Social Inclusion** through the **implementation** of youth development interventions and processes that are holistic, socially inclusive, gender-sensitive and informed by intersectionality analyses
- Enhance **youth policy environments** through functional strategic partnerships, adequate budgetary allocations and timely investments, responsive institutional arrangements, competent youth development professionals and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Facilitate **active Citizenship** through the **strategic engagement** of young people in the civic and democratic life of Trinidad and Tobago.

Through this Policy the Government of Trinidad and Tobago acknowledges the utility of asset-based approaches to youth development which focus on building upon and accentuating young people's assets rather the traditional problem-based approach which emphasises their supposed incapacities.

The Policy articulates eight interconnected youth development "Pillars":

1. **Prioritising youth economic participation and empowerment.**
2. **Harnessing youth social and intellectual capital.**
3. **Facilitating inclusive and active youth participation in the civic and democratic life of Trinidad Tobago.**

4. **Creating safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments**
5. **Accentuating holistic youth health and wellbeing.**
6. **Emphasising youth contributions to rural transformation, agricultural production, and food security.**
7. **Supporting youth action on climate change, environmental sustainability, and climate justice.**
8. **Creating an enabling environment for positive youth development in Trinidad and Tobago.**

These eight (8) interconnected pillars are in congruence with the core principles of positive youth development, the World Programme of Action on Youth Development, 2000 and Beyond, Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan and Vision 2030, among others. The National Youth Policy (2020 – 2025), re-affirms the concept of youth development as a sustainable development imperative and amplifies the value of empowering and strategically engaging Trinidad and Tobago's diverse, youth population as co-creators of sustainable development.

1.0 Introduction

We propose that all Commonwealth governments should make a special commitment to youth development. This should take the form of the development, refinement and implementation of national youth policies as instruments of change[ix]

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago National Youth Policy (2020-2025) espouses a human rights-based approach to youth development. It is grounded in a positive youth development paradigm and is designed to harness the agency and navigational capacities of Trinidad and Tobago youth. The Policy reasonably embodies a synopsis of the dreams and aspirations of the diverse youth population of Trinidad and Tobago. The Policy advocates the strategic engagement and nurturing of the social and intellectual capital of Trinidad and Tobago's diverse youth population, support their economic empowerment, promote active citizenship, and facilitate their inclusion as co-creators in development.

This Policy provides the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and other key youth development stakeholders with a guiding framework. This framework will positively impact and transform the youth development landscape and also support the institutional strengthening and strategic repositioning of principal youth development agencies, particularly the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS). Critically, this National Youth Policy is an essential tool to support the mainstreaming of youth in Trinidad and Tobago's development processes; facilitate stakeholder engagement and participation; and provide a framework for monitoring and evaluation. Most importantly, the Policy is a vital tributary in Trinidad and Tobago's post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan, the Vision 2030 National Development Strategy (2016 - 2030) and the broader 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

1.1 What is a National Youth Policy?

A comprehensive national youth policy is an essential requirement and process if young men and women are to be integrated fully into society and allowed to achieve their potential. There is a special need to protect young people from exploitation and neglect, while also proactively ensuring their economic inclusion, their civic, social and cultural participation[x].

A national youth policy is a critical component of a country's youth development ecology. It is a public policy instrument which articulates a concrete and transparent strategy (Denstad, 2009) to guide and support the country's youth development agenda. The policy instrument reasonably defines the contextual realities of the heterogeneous youth population. A youth policy articulates a guiding philosophy for the prevailing or emerging youth development priorities. As an instrument of development, it accentuates the active engagement and inclusion of the diverse youth population as strategic partners in sustainable development (CYP, 2008, 2007, Dunne et al. 2014). The overarching purpose of a youth policy is youth empowerment, and therefore it underscores the fundamental rights of young people.

Most importantly, a youth policy is not peripheral but rather integral to the broader development agenda. The profundity of a national youth policy is indicative of both a country's democracy quotient and political maturity. Finally, a youth policy provides a framework to foster enhanced relationships between the State and the diverse youth population[xi]. A modern and progressive youth policy is also a development imperative in crafting a comprehensive post-COVID-19 recovery and development strategy. This is necessary even while supporting the amelioration of the several risks and development challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.

2.0 Methodology

The literature emphasises the suitability of evidence-based approaches to policy formulation (OECD,2017; Sutcliffe &Court, 2005). These relevant treatises guide the policy formulation, and in recognition of international best practice, evidence-based approaches were utilised in the crafting of this revised National Youth Policy. Before the development of the policy, the perceptions of a variety of youth development stakeholders were researched using a variety of data collection methodologies. It is through this evidence-based interrogation of the youth development context, a variety of development challenges, opportunities, key and emerging priorities were identified.

The overall methodological approach involved analysing the current realities and identifying the different social structures that influence youth (Wu et al, 2017). The analysis included a desk review of more than 30 national, regional, and international documents relevant to youth, including development plans, policies, and reports.

Although this documentation was useful, it was necessary to engage a range of stakeholders who represent young people and those who support and work with youth in Trinidad and Tobago. The stakeholders involved comprised youth throughout Trinidad and Tobago, youth practitioners, youth leaders, educators, and civil society representatives. They participated in interviews, focus groups and web-based surveys. This approach was necessary to understand their perceptions of youth development as well as the Government's response to youth development in Trinidad and Tobago. Due to limitations and the World Health Organisation's (WHO) advised protocols of physical distancing during COVID-19, only five interviews were conducted face to face. The remaining interviews were conducted via Zoom.

Five hundred and sixty-three (563) young people completed a youth survey. The largest group (45.3%) of respondents were in the 15 to 19 age group; 26% were in the 20 to 24 age group; 22.4% and 6% were in the 12 to 14 age group. Sixty-five percent (65%) of respondents were female.

Twenty-one focus group discussions were conducted between July and August 2020 with an average of seven persons per focus group. Twenty-three key informants completed the online survey. Also, there were 26 key informant interviews where 90 persons participated. Finally, the community consultations report was analysed to get a holistic view of the youth development landscape.

3.0 Situational Analysis

3.1 Global Youth Development Context

The 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY) provided a strategic and guiding framework to support both global and local action on youth policy development. The significance and critical need for evidenced-based integrated youth policies were further accentuated at the 1998 Lisbon Ministers of youth meeting where the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes was adopted. The declaration states:

> *We, therefore, commit ourselves to Developing national youth policies and operational programmes, at appropriate levels, to implement the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, taking into account the national priorities, realities and limitations arising from different socio-economic and cultural development contexts*[xii]

The Commonwealth Plan of Action on Youth Empowerment (PAYE 2007 – 2015. p.29) mandated Commonwealth governments and other youth development stakeholders to: "Formulate and implement national policies and action plans on youth empowerment". PAYE also recommended periodic "review and update of existing youth policies and their corresponding strategic action plans based on the assessment of their impact on youth

empowerment". Several other global development partners, including the World Bank, European Union, Council on Europe and the United States Agency for International Development, have also emphasised the significance of national youth policies as a development instrument.

Yet, despite the plethora of policy guidelines and exhortations, challenges regarding political support for and investments in national youth policies have persisted, prompting the Director-General of UNESCO in 2004 to articulate the following incisive commentary:

> *Over the past decade, several countries have initiated processes of designing and implementing national legislation and strategies focused on youth. However, most countries today have no public policy relating specifically to young people. Furthermore, even for those which have developed this rather new form of legislation, too often, it is piecemeal. It lacks a comprehensive approach to the challenges faced by the younger generation. Consequently, there is a great need to share experience in this specific field of public policy and to produce tools to assist Member States in addressing youth issues systematically* [xiii]

Global support for evidence-based, integrated, and sustainable youth development policies was re-affirmed at the 2014 Global Forum on Youth Policies, held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Baku forum provided a valuable opportunity for reflection on the evolving global youth development ethos and to recalibrate the global youth policy development agenda. Specifically, the "Baku Commitment on Youth Policies" re-affirmed the critical necessity of coordinated and comprehensive action to actualise the global youth policy agenda.

3.2 An Overview of the Caribbean Youth Development Context

The CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD 2010) report succinctly articulated the case for a paradigm shift in youth development strategy, positing that

> *Youth are in a developmental stage of life. The vast majority is making the transition to socially responsible and productive adulthood, but there is a minority that is not. The first change in our thinking must be to refrain from using this minority to brand all youth. Secondly, with respect to the minority itself, the change in thinking must be to see them first as potential assets to be nurtured, not as a cancer to be repressed. What is required is more investment to provide them with additional opportunities to develop their creative and productive capacities; While efforts must necessarily be made to limit the negative impact of risk and vulnerability factors, the first line of thinking must be to allocate more resources to strengthen the institutions that should serve as protective factors – the family, the community, the school, the faith-based organizations.*[xiv]

According to this paradigm shift, several challenges with significant implications for youth empowerment and well-being must be prioritised. These include the prevailing tokenistic approaches towards and limited opportunities for active youth participation in decision-making and development processes, even those that profoundly impact young people. A confluence of these factors results in vicious circles of exclusion, inequality, deviance, and underperformance that some youth find particularly challenging to transcend. Caribbean youth development stakeholders have, individually or collectively communicated their support, and pledged "to explicitly recognise and clearly articulate the role of youth in Caribbean development." (Declaration of Paramaribo on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean Community, 2010). According to the "Declaration", Caribbean Heads of Government recognised "the right of adolescents and youth to participate in decision-making on matters in which they have an interest, and that affect them." The Heads of Government further acknowledged young people as valued partners, yet an under-utilised resource for deepening integration, a positive force for creating safe and peaceful communities and leaders in innovation and technology.

The re-emergent Caribbean Youth Movement (Caribbean Youth Leaders' Summit, 2016 2017 and 2020) has emphasised the need for these policy goals to become operationalised. Those youth leaders' summits have re-emphasised the value of active youth participation in development processes. The re-emergent youth movement has also re-affirmed the urgency and efficacy of evidence-based and integrated youth policies. The 2020 Caribbean Youth Leaders' Summit (CYLS) focused on the vexing issues of youth unemployment, challenges of the workplace environment peculiar to youth and youth economic participation in the context of SDG8. Among the several, pertinent observations, and recommendations, the CYLS 2020 concluded thus:

> *In order to foster a society that embraces inclusion, young people must be enabled to act as agents of positive social change, contributing to the development of policies which directly or indirectly affect their lives and impact their contributions to an evolving 21st-century economy.*[xv]

The Caribbean youth development landscape has also benefitted from an evolving relationship among traditional youth development stakeholders and academic communities as evident by the University of the West Indies (UWI) related strategic interventions such as the undergraduate and postgraduate training opportunities in Youth Development and the UWI Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies 50/50 Youth Research Cluster. The cluster functions as a network of academics and professionals involved in youth development research. The main objectives of the group are to help build the evidence-base for Caribbean youth development; foster interdisciplinary collaboration and provide capacity building support to both youth-led and youth-serving institutions and processes in the Caribbean community. Then there are positive initiatives, including investments in citizens' security to impact young

people living in challenging circumstances positively. Some other pertinent interventions are the collaborative efforts and actions being taken to develop evidence-based integrated national youth policies, promote the concept of youth mainstreaming and the professionalisation of youth development work within national and regional spaces. Another consequential intervention is the recently approved Caribbean Development Bank's (CDB) Youth Policy and Operational Strategy (YPOS).

3.3 Trinidad and Tobago Youth Development Context

3.3.1 Defining Youth

This Policy defines youth as persons between the ages 10-35 years. This chronological definition serves an essential statistical purpose. However, it is understood that youth is not a homogenous construct as the young people of Trinidad and Tobago come from diverse socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds and have unique abilities, learning and living experiences. They have different gender identities, religious beliefs, and ideological dispositions. Their attitudes, perspectives and worldview are primarily influenced and shaped by these factors as well as the nature and impact of socio-ecological factors such as family, peers, learning environments, community support systems, public policy environments and national development priorities.

The unique needs, vulnerabilities, special circumstances and specific identities of young people are interwoven in the policy interventions and will shape future youth development interventions and emphasise integrated approaches. The Policy also acknowledges that youth represent a transitional period associated with several critical life-transforming biological and social-psychological developments. Hence the reason the Policy has adopted a life-cycle approach to youth development. Consistent with this life-cycle approach to youth development, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will develop and implement age-specific youth programmes to cater for the unique and diverse needs of young people as follows:[2xvi]

- 10 – 14 years of age (Middle Childhood to Adolescence/Youth)
- 15 – 17 years (Adolescence/Youth)
- 18 – 21 years (Adolescence/Early adulthood/Youth)
- 22 – 29 years (Early Adulthood / Youth)
- 30 – 35 years (Early Adulthood/transitioning from Youth.)

3.3.2Youth Demographic Profile

Trinidad and Tobago has a total population of 1,363,985 according to the Mid-Year Estimates by the Central Statistical Office 2019. Of this, the 2019 estimation reveals a youth population of 435,585. The age breakdown by sex for youth is as follows:

- 10 – 14 years: 46,170 males; 44,175 females
- 15 – 19 years: 51,055 males; 49,988 females
- 20 – 24 years: 58,962 males; 58,372 females
- 20 – 29 years: 63,954 males; 62,909 females

- 30 – 34 years: 55,357 males; 53,083 females

The total youth population is approximately forty percent (40%) of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago.

3.4 Contextualising the Policy in the National, Regional and Global Development Framework

Wu, Ramesh, Howlett and Fritzen (2017) underscored the myriad of challenges governments must grapple with in contemporary policy formulation processes. They identified the fragmentation of societal, political and policy institutions charged with organising collective action in government. Wu et al. (2017) posited that "The polarisation and fragmentation of public aspirations, ever-rising expectations of government, secular declines in public confidence and trust in government institutions also compound the challenges facing policymakers"(2017, p3). In recognition of these challenges, it is necessary to emphasise the dialectical relationships among youth policies as instruments of empowerment and other pertinent national, regional and global policy and development frameworks.

This Policy is therefore crafted in a manner to emphasise the shared purpose, strategic objectives and philosophical underpinnings with several development frameworks and policies. The frameworks and policies include Vision 2030 - The National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago 2016 – 2030; The Caribbean Community Youth Development Action Plan (CYDAP); the Global Youth Development Index (GYDI); and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Convention on the Rights of the Child; Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Draft National Parenting Policy of Trinidad and Tobago (2017); Draft National Child Policy (2018-2028); The Education Policy Paper (2017-2022); The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities (2018) and the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development (2018).

3.5 Stakeholders Perception of the Youth Development Context

In the last two decades, the concept of evidence-based policy has emerged as a methodology which informs the policy, although not necessarily affecting the eventual policy goals. The concept emphasises a more rational, systematic, and rigorous approach to the policy formulation process. The evidenced-based approach is grounded in the premise that the quality and efficacy of policies are accentuated when they are informed by evidence and rational analysis. The thinking is evidence-based policy has a greater likelihood of producing more positive outcomes. In the global development space, it is rationalised that evidence-based policy processes can have a significant impact on the development landscape (OECD,2017; Sutcliffe & Court, 2005). However, according to Sutcliffe & Court (2005), several pertinent issues arise in the use of evidence-based policymaking. Some of these issues include:

1. The policy should be informed by good quality, credible and relevant evidence, collected from a diversity of sources, utilising a variety of methods.
2. Evidence has the potential of impacting and influencing each stage of the policy process, from setting the agenda to formulating and implementing the policy. Therefore, different types of evidence and methods of collection mechanisms may be required at each stage of the policy process.
3. Evidence is not the sole factor which influences policymaking. During each stage of the policy cycle, a variety of diverse factors, including the policymaker's own experience, expertise and professional judgement and institutional capacity may impact or influence the policy – and at an institutional level, for example in terms of institutional capacity.

Several common issues and overlapping themes emerged from the data collection exercise. Through the triangulation process, the findings suggested that all the stakeholders were concerned about *youth economic capital, quality education and training, youth health and wellbeing, unrepresented and marginalised youth, safe spaces, communities and environments for young people, active youth participation in civic and governance, youth and climate change, social inclusion, institutional strengthening, and youth mainstreaming*

There were shared concerns and recommendations. The shared concerns and recommendations were identified as emerging priority areas. From the emerging priorities, the key objectives and pillars of the National Youth Policy were developed. It must be noted that all the stakeholders stressed that the policy must be implemented with a monitoring and evaluation strategy. The emerging priorities from the data that were modified and developed into the pillars for the National Youth Policy are:

1. **Youth Economic Participation and Empowerment**. Youth economic empowerment and participation were critical issues highlighted by all stakeholders. The key informants and the young people interviewed opined that economic capital of young people was essential. Young people will feel empowered to participate in the economy if they have the economic capital to make a meaningful contribution to their communities. The youth stakeholders identified the need for "decent work" for young people in Trinidad and Tobago to enhance their participation in the labour market. They also highlighted the importance of apprenticeships as work-based learning so that the job experience gap will be narrowed. All the stakeholders highlighted the need for opportunities for youth entrepreneurship and job creation. The stakeholders emphasised the importance of the green (environmentally friendly), blue (marine) and orange (creative) economies. They recommended that young people must be given opportunities to engage in activities to develop sustainable livelihoods. It was also suggested that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago examine the role of young people in the green and blue economy as catalysts in the creation of sustainable livelihoods. Most importantly, they recommended that policymakers and implementers ensure that the principles of inclusiveness and equity guide their economic policies and interventions.

2. **Education and Training.** Education and training are pertinent to the development of young people. Many of the stakeholders stated despite all the changes in education, where young people have access to educational opportunities, there are still some issues of access. They were also concerned that the purely academic aspect of education is not sustainable. They argued for quality education where competency-based education and training (knowledge, skills, and attitude) is the focus.

3. **Youth Active Participation in Civic Activities and Governance.** All stakeholders highlighted active youth participation in civic activities and governance. The stakeholders opined that many times youth participation is tokenistic. They suggested that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago ensure the initiatives developed to facilitate youth participation are meaningful. The young people of Trinidad and Tobago must feel that their contributions to national development are valued, and all categories of young people are included in the youth development processes. Youth active participation in climate change and disaster mitigation was also emphasised as critical. Several stakeholders thought that young people are not engaged in climate change and disaster mitigation activities adequately. There was a call for young people to contribute to initiatives addressing climate change and disaster mitigation and for the Government to facilitate the active engagement in climate change and disaster mitigation issues.

4. **Youth Health and Wellbeing.** The stakeholders were very concerned about the mental health of the youth. They highlighted several risk factors and behaviours that contribute to the poor health of youth. While they acknowledged that psychological support was available, young people did not access the services. They recommended the decentralisation of psychological services and ensure that young people have the pertinent information they need to access the available services. Sexual and reproductive health was also highlighted as problematic. They opined that young people must have access to quality health services, especially mental health, and sexual and reproductive health.

5. **Creating Safe Spaces and Peaceful Environments.** The youth stakeholders were concerned about the availability of safe spaces for young people to express themselves without prejudice. They also described the issue of young people as perpetrators or victims of criminal activities and advocated for the decrease in violence and gang activity among youth. They emphasised the importance of the participation of young people in the creation of safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments. The stakeholders believed when young people fully participate in the enhancement of their security, young people will assume leadership roles, become collaborators and beneficiaries in the process. They also opined that young people who feel safe would engage in prosocial behaviours that would enhance their wellbeing.

6. **Under-represented and Marginalised Youth.** The stakeholders thought that these groups were not included sufficiently in the decision making and suggested that the policy highlight this critical youth demographic. Given the number of persons living with disabilities, emphasis must be placed on ensuring their rights and affording them the opportunity for equal participation in society. Youth with disabilities are often ostracised from society; therefore, the youth development framework must include youth in a meaningful and consistent manner in all aspects of society to promote conditions for inclusiveness and participation.

7. **Youth Mainstreaming.** The stakeholders believed that many organizations work in silos, and consequently, many youth development programmes and initiatives are duplicated. The duplication of programmes and initiatives does not benefit young people, and it is not cost-effective. The stakeholders suggested the development and adoption of a youth mainstreaming strategy for Trinidad and Tobago.

Institutional Strengthening, including Capacity Building Support for Youth Workers. The stakeholders also emphasised the importance of an enabling policy environment to harness the holistic development of the nation's youth. They saw the necessity to revisit the bureaucratic nature of the policy environment that hinders the seamless integration of policies and initiatives. Most importantly, the stakeholders strongly recommended an implementation strategy and a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide the policy. It was envisaged that the efficacy of the policy would be determined by the level of implementation and the monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives implemented.

4.0 Philosophy, Vision and Mission

4.1 Youth Policy Philosophy: Positive Youth Development

Young people should be seen as engines of growth rather than a problem to be addressed [xvii]

Positive Youth Development (PYD) debunks the core values of traditional problem-based approach to and deficit perspective of youth development. The PYD approach leverages the valuable contributions and inherent capacity of young people to lead their development. Damon (2004, p15) posited,

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"The positive youth development perspective emphasizes the manifest potentialities rather than the supposed incapacities of young people, including young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds and those with the most troubled histories.

While the positive youth development approach recognizes the existence of adversities and developmental challenges that may affect children in various ways, it resists conceiving of the developmental process mainly as an effort to overcome deficits and risk. Instead, it begins with a vision of a fully-abled child eager to explore the world, gain competence, and acquire the capacity to contribute importantly to the world. The Positive Youth Development approach aims at understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing, or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so-called disabilities."

Some key characteristics of positive youth development include a focus on positive outcomes, pro-action rather than reaction, active youth participation and systemic change. Pittman (1991) outlined 5 Cs of positive youth development, namely: Character, Connection, Competence, Contribution and Confidence. Lerner (2007) articulated an additional C, namely Caring.

Figure 1: Six C's of Positive Youth Development

4.2 Youth Policy Vision

Trinidad and Tobago's diverse youth population is continuously empowered and strategically engaged as co-creators of sustainable development.

4.3 Policy Mission

Contribute to the development of intellectually accomplished, politically conscious, culturally literate, economically empowered, socially connected, technologically savvy,

healthy young people; living in peaceful, diverse circumstances, communities and nurturing environments, and are strategically engaged as active citizens and co-creators of Trinidad and Tobago's economic recovery and sustainable futures.

5.0 Objectives, Values and Principles

5.1 Youth Policy Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of the National Youth Policy is **Youth Empowerment.** This national youth policy aims to:

I. **Mainstream** youth priorities across all development sectors of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

II. Promote **social inclusion** through **the implementation** of youth development interventions and processes that are holistic, socially inclusive, gender-responsive and informed by intersectionality analyses.

III. Enhance **youth policy environments** through functional strategic partnerships, adequate budgetary allocations and timely investments, responsive institutional arrangements, competent youth development professionals and effective monitoring and evaluation systems.

IV. Facilitate **active citizenship** through the strategic engagement of young people in the civic and democratic life of Trinidad and Tobago. Enable legislation and policy frameworks which acknowledge their right to participate and accentuate their role as agents of change and co-creators of sustainable development. Active citizenship also underscores young people's understanding of and assuming their individual and collective responsibilities as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Fifteen strategic objectives to support policy goals. These objectives are to:

1. Facilitate enhanced youth economic participation.
2. Promote youth economic empowerment.
3. Develop socially conscious, intellectually accomplished, culturally literate, and resilient young people.
4. Support inclusive and active youth participation in civic and democratic processes.
5. Create safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments.
6. Promote healthy lifestyles and youth wellbeing.
7. Facilitate youth contribution to environmental sustainability.
8. Support youth action on climate change and climate justice and disaster mitigation.
9. Enhance youth contribution to rural transformation.
10. Enhance youth participation in agricultural production
11. Enhance youth contribution to food security.
12. Support the institutional strengthening of youth development agencies and institutions.

13. Develop and implement sustainable funding arrangements for youth development.
14. Enact legislation and policies that are supportive of positive youth development processes.
15. Facilitate the mainstreaming of youth priorities across all development sectors.

This Policy will be actualized with a Strategic Action Plan, with indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.

5.2 Core Values

The Policy espouses the following core values:

Social Justice. The Policy embraces the concept of social justice and emphasises the importance of acting on behalf of the vulnerable and oppressed.

Human Dignity and Worth of the Person. Youth development practitioners, individually and acting on behalf of State agencies have an obligation to respect the fundamental dignity and worth of young people and treat everyone with care and respect.

Integrity and Transparency. Youth workers and youth development agencies must behave in a trustworthy and ethical manner consistent with their organisational mission, ethical standards, and values of the youth work profession.

Accountability and Responsibility. The principles of accountability and responsibility are critical for positive youth development. Young people and youth development practitioners must be cognisant that their actions and decisions may have unintended consequences. Specifically, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and all youth development stakeholders are obligated to account for their stewardship of the National Youth Policy. Further, young people must be encouraged and supported to take responsibility as active members of families, communities, learning and working environments, among peer groups; and as active regional and global citizens.

Competence. Youth development agencies must ensure youth workers are competent practitioners and must provide opportunities for them to develop their professional expertise continuously.

5.3 Policy Implementation Principles

The National Youth Policy is grounded in a positive youth development paradigm and accentuates the critical role of young people as positive agents for democracy and the rule of law; social change; transformational leaders and co-creators in sustainable development. Most importantly, the policy emphasises three implementing principles. The core principles are articulated as:

Principle 1: Embracing Human Rights

The rights-based approach to youth development is based upon the spirit, principles, and provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The principal rights declaration acknowledges the inalienable right of people. Rights-based approaches to development are based on the acknowledgement that people are active participants and primary partners in their development. It also acknowledges that duty-bearers (State and Non-state actors) are obligated to enable rights-holders to be aware of and exercise their rights in development processes (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi, 2004).

Principle 2: Social Inclusion and Intersectionality

Youth is not a homogenous group. Diverse social identities such as gender, abilities, socio-economic and migrant status, ethnicity, and educational attainment play critical roles in shaping personal experiences, realities, and their world view. These social identities may also impact their needs, dreams, and aspirations. Hence, the validity of appropriately representing youth diversity in public policies and youth development interventions.

Principle 3. Inclusive and Active Youth Participation

Participation is a fundamental guiding principle of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'. This right is reiterated in other Conventions and Declarations, including the Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)[xviii] and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[xix]

6.0 Strategic Policy Priorities and Outcomes for Youth Development

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is working assiduously to accomplish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has also targeted 2030 as the year to achieve developed nation status. The eight interconnected youth development **"Pillars"** articulated in this Policy are in congruence with the Sustainable Development Goals and Trinidad and Tobago's strategic development vision. These pillars will be operationalised through strategic youth development interventions, utilising a youth mainstreaming strategy and will be supported by timely financial investments in youth empowerment initiatives, inclusive and active participation of young people, responsive and functional institutional arrangements, functional strategic partnerships among crucial youth development stakeholders and a professionalised youth development work culture.

These strategic priorities are contextualised in the current and emerging Trinidad and Tobago development landscape, and prioritises youth economic participation and empowerment; youth health and wellbeing; inclusive and active youth participation in civic and democratic life; youth intellectual and social capital; youth contributions to rural transformation and food security; the role of young people in creating safe spaces, peaceful communities and environments; youth action on environmental sustainability, climate change and renewable energies and youth leadership in science, technology and innovation.

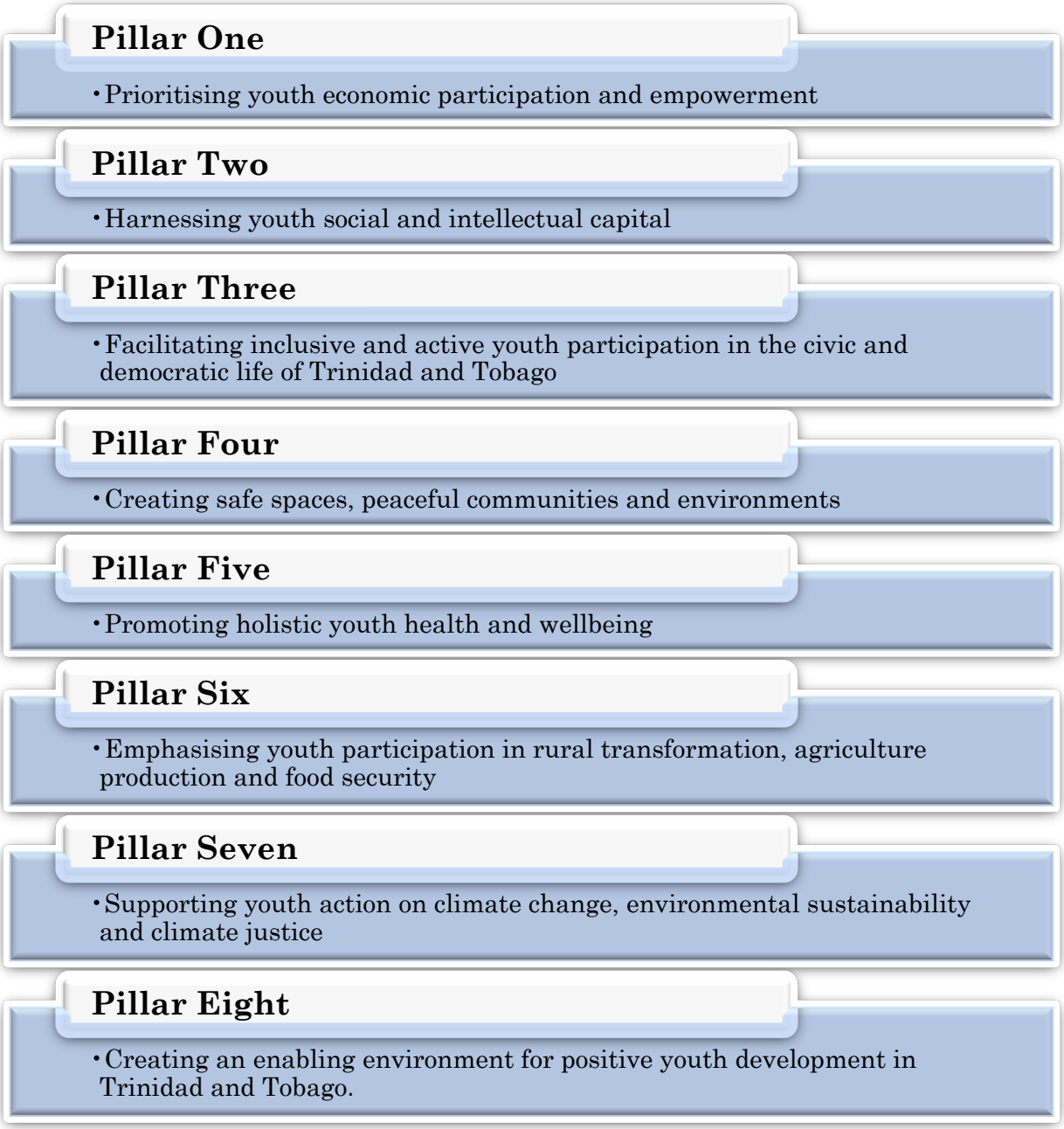

FIGURE 2: STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Pillar 1: Prioritising youth economic participation and empowerment.

Outcome:

Youth economic participation is prioritised and incentivised.

Strategic Objectives:

- Facilitate enhanced youth economic participation.
- Promote youth economic empowerment.
- Create an internationally accredited ecosystem to support youth innovation.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions:

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Accentuate youth economic participation by:**
   - Improving the policy environment and institutional frameworks for youth-led Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
   - Facilitating access to finance and business development services (such as business coaches, and mentorship) for all youth entrepreneurs.
   - Supporting the development of a suite of financing options for young entrepreneurs and MSMEs through loan guarantee facilities, alternative financing mechanisms, grants, and micro-finance schemes.
   - Facilitating inclusive and active youth participation in developing macro-economic policies.
   - Integrating youth-specific issues and indicators into economic policy and strategies.
   - Engaging young people in responsive budgeting.
   - Integrating intersectional, gendered, and generational considerations into macro-economic policy.
   - Accelerating opportunities for youth homeownership by creating appropriate youth-friendly or youth-focused incentives to support the private sector and social entrepreneurship driven solutions to housing.
   - Creating opportunities for youth land ownership, especially for landless young people in rural communities.
   - Creating an enabling environment for decent work opportunities for young people.
   - Promoting inclusive and active youth participation and leadership of the trade union movement.
   - Actively engaging young people in the development of fit-for-purpose, short-term employment programmes.
   - Assessing the efficacy of existing short-term employment programmes and revamping these programmes where necessary to ensure greater relevance and effectiveness.
   - Supporting interventions which increase youth financial literacy.
   - Creating public procurement policy and processes that are more youth-friendly.

2. **Promote youth skills for inclusive economic growth by:**
   - Supporting a youth-led national dialogue on the future of work in Trinidad and Tobago and ensuring the inclusive and active participation in such an initiative.

- Developing and harnessing the opportunities provided by new and emerging industries, including fashion, culture, arts, entertainment, agriculture, technology and sports.
- Exploring creative pathways of tackling under-represented categories of young people in various sectors (e.g. young women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM), young women as sports professionals, young men as teachers, etc.)
- Optimising the employment opportunities provided by emerging green and blue economies.
- Accelerating the modernisation of apprenticeship schemes, internships, workforce development initiatives and school-to-work transition programmes. The focus is on modern and future-focused career guidance and planning, targeted career and employability skills development, education-related work experiences and opportunities for career growth.
- Supporting the tailoring of financial services and business support facilities to be more modern, youth-centric, and youth-responsive.
- Supporting the development of standards or models for *equal employment opportunity policies and practices* that minimise or eradicate the discrimination of young men and young women in the workplace.
- Supporting the development of practical learning resources for young entrepreneurs that could be applied to business development.
- Supporting the creation of high-impact youth accelerator programmes in emerging and high-growth sectors to facilitate youth access to capital, mentoring, and training.
- Promoting and supporting interventions which encourage technology-based and innovation-driven youth entrepreneurship.
- Providing an environment that strengthens young entrepreneurship networks.
- Supporting sustainable interventions for young entrepreneurs such as capacity building, information exchange, partnership building and policy advocacy.

3. Facilitate youth innovation for sustainable development by:

- Supporting initiatives that foster and advance technology and innovation, notably, higher diffusion of Information and Computer Technologies (ICTs) to those young people with little to no digital access.
- Engaging all stakeholders through multi-sectoral partnerships to promote training and capacity building campaigns which make digital technologies and programmes available to youth through schools, community groups, NGO's, and youth clubs.
- Providing streamlined support for emerging innovators, high-tech start-ups, and technology entrepreneurs, whether it be through business incubators, knowledge exchanges, think tanks or centres to support youth-led innovation.
- Stimulating and supporting an innovation ecosystem that mobilises, and invests in innovation through grants, tax breaks and other incentives that encourage public-private partnerships and university-industry collaboration.
- Supporting interventions that enhance digital literacy skills for digitally excluded rural youth communities.

6.2 Pillar 2: Harnessing youth social and intellectual capital

Outcomes:

- Young men and women are active participants in transforming learning environments.
- Young people demonstrate social competence and resilience.

If we ask people to look for deficits, they will usually find them, and their view of the situation will be coloured by this. If we ask people to look for successes, they will usually find it, and their view of the situation will be coloured by this[xx]

Strategic Objectives:

- Facilitate the development of academically competent and intellectually accomplished young people.
- Facilitate the development of technologically savvy and technically competent young people.
- Facilitate the development of socially conscious, culturally literate, and resilient young people.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Foster youth creativity, excellence and productivity by:**
   - Developing SDG compliant learning environments.
   - Accelerating the digitalisation of learning environments.
   - Enhancing the opportunities for young people to create and utilise technological and innovative solutions to address development challenges.
   - Undertaking required education sector reform. This is necessary to create a more fit-for-purpose sector through initiatives which treat curriculum relevance and connectedness, learning integration and critical life skills as development priorities.
   - Supporting systems which bolster educators' confidence in adapting relevant learning approaches and activities to suit the needs of diverse learners.
   - Accentuating life-long learning initiatives targeting both young women and men in vulnerable situations that enhance navigational capacities and life skills for self-sufficiency, actualisation, and empowerment.
   - Implementing initiatives to foster student motivation and engagement in learning.
   - Supporting the development of infrastructure needed to create safe and inclusive learning environments and cultures for the ideal participation of persons with special learning needs, including gifted students, Young People Living with Disabilities (YPLWDs), and young persons in school but not learning.

2. **Accentuate lifelong learning and TVET by:**
   - Developing modern Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes that are more responsive to emerging labour markets, youth interests, or the nation's sustainable developmental needs.
   - Developing the capacity of TVET educators to ensure that they have the dynamic pedagogical skills compliant to international best practices.
   - Promoting initiatives that bolster the options available and accessible for the CVQ.

3. **Promote creative arts and sports for sustainable development by:**
   - Supporting development initiatives which utilise sports as a tool for sustainable development.
   - Supporting the development of critical sectors such as visual and performing arts as avenues for non-formal youth work.
   - Providing pathways for the promotion of young persons living with disabilities' involvement in creative arts and sports.
   - Promoting youth social inclusion through cultural production and the creative arts.
   - Encouraging collaborations and partnership among youth in the creative sector.
   - Expanding the scope of programmes at youth development facilities and centres to incorporate creative arts.
   - Supporting the establishment of youth-led and youth-serving creative cultural hubs in main city centres.
   - Improving the physical and digital infrastructure of youth facilities and training centres for positive youth activity and cultural production in the creative arts.
   - Enhancing the sustainability of youth participation in the creative sector through the development of a registry of youth and youth-led NGOs in the sector and by utilising their skills and services as a preferred option for leading marketing, communications and entertainment services in youth programmes and projects of the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service.

6.3 Pillar 3: Facilitating inclusive and active youth participation in the civic and democratic life of Trinidad and Tobago.

Outcomes:

- Young people are engaged as co-creators in governance and development processes.
- Functional youth-led organisations and networks.
- Active youth participation in civic and democratic processes.

Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other Conventions and Declarations. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. To participate effectively, young people must be given the proper tools, such as information, education about and access to their civil rights[xxi].

Strategic Objectives:

- Create opportunities for inclusive and active youth participation.
- Establish policies and protocols to support youth participation.
- Provide young people with the necessary tools to improve the quality and impact of their participation.
- Foster social inclusion; build youth agency and resilience.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Facilitate active youth participation in democratic structures and processes by:**
   - Facilitating a '*country context analysis'* of youth participation in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Implementing appropriate legislative and policy measures to support the fullest participation of young people with disabilities, youth transitioning State Institutions and other marginalised strata of youth.
- Providing opportunities for young people to contribute to national and regional development priorities, including internships and young professionals' programmes at the municipality, national and regional public sector, private sector, and civil society organisations.
- Providing opportunities to train and engage young women and young men in project management, social auditing and community need assessment techniques to facilitate their active participation in the planning and implementation of community-based development initiatives.
- Providing institutional and programme support to democratic youth-led youth networks and platforms to enhance their effectiveness.
- Developing and implementing school and community-based programmes to enhance youth awareness of the principles and practices of democratic governance.
- Supporting the implementation of youth-driven solutions for enhancing youth active participation and voter engagement, particularly those targeting youth who are traditionally marginalised or excluded (e.g. rural youth, young persons living with disabilities)
- Developing initiatives to enhance young people's awareness of and participation in anti-corruption initiatives.
- Supporting credible *'intersectionality – based'* research initiatives on the participation of young men and young women in the electoral cycle and other areas of political participation.
- Accelerating the development of mechanisms and processes which offer digital solutions to transparency, monitoring, accountability, communication, engagement, and emphasise access to information by young people as connected citizens able to contribute to public policy.
- Establishing a '*Young Professionals Innovation Fund'* to support targeted, large-scale, innovative, and high-impact youth-driven and youth-focused development solutions proposed by young professionals in varying sectors.
- Supporting initiatives to amplify young people's voice in their respective communities, to cultivate leadership capacities, and enhance communication among youth, and between youth and other demographic groups to foster collaboration that is imperative in addressing national development challenges and crises.

2. Accentuate youth activism as a catalyst for social change by:

- Supporting, empowering and engaging, young people as catalysts for social change across all levels of government and sectors of development.
- Supporting youth-led activism as an effective tool to amplify the collective power of youth voices
- Creating opportunities and safe spaces for direct engagement between young people and policymakers, including parliamentarians, members of the Tobago House of

Assembly and Local Government Councillors to discuss issues confronting youth and their communities.

- Engaging young people in the creation of public awareness and social media campaigns to ensure messages are inclusive, relevant and reach diverse audiences.
- Protecting the rights of young people to freely express their opinions, worldview and perspectives on development processes and to engage in advocacy to promote their rights, responsibilities and interests.

3. Facilitate the development of 'Emerging Political Leadership' by:

- Developing and implementing '*strategic leadership'* courses for parliamentarians and local government councillors to improve their appreciation and capacity to respond to the needs of under-represented groups, especially young women, young persons living with disabilities, and youth in rural communities.
- Facilitating the creation of a multi-party network of parliamentarians to discuss and advance the youth development agenda in the public policy arena.
- Developing programmes to support the creation of enabling environments for the engagement and promotion of underrepresented strata of youth, including young women and young persons with disabilities in Parliament.

4. Enhance democratic traditions and practices through youth participation by:

- Revamping existing youth participation structures to become more inclusive and better reflect the heterogeneity of youth in the community and embrace engagement processes that are genuinely democratised rather than inherently unequal.
- Supporting the re-designing of existing youth parliament, where necessary, to enhance representativeness.
- Developing accredited '*strategic leadership'* development training programmes for community-based youth leaders. Such programmes should include training in project management, public policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation, principles, and practice of good governance, etc.

5. Facilitate youth leadership and youth-centric governance initiatives by:

- Supporting the institutional strengthening and capacity building of youth-led or youth-focused community-based and civil society organisations, especially those focused on persons living with disabilities, youth in marginalised and vulnerable communities, youth in poor rural and peri-urban communities.
- Transforming governance processes and culture to embrace technology that is responsive to youthful citizens (e.g. crowdsourcing development solutions, youth engagement through online platforms).
- Promoting initiatives which facilitate rights-based intergenerational relationships in political and democratic spaces.
- Establishing a National Youth Service Programme (NYS-TT) which is designed to appeal to the broadest cross-section of Trinidad and Tobago's diverse youth population. The NYS-TT will play a pivotal role in nurturing and harnessing the social and intellectual capital of the diverse youth population. NYS-TT will, as a matter of utmost

priority, assist in transforming perceived laboratories of hopelessness and despair into crucibles of social inclusion, creativity, innovation and youth empowerment. The NYS-TT will be designed to contribute to the goal of creating active and responsible citizenship and actualizing the national motto; "Discipline, Production, Tolerance."

6.4 Pillar 4: Creating safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments.

Outcomes:

- Young people are co-creators and beneficiaries of safe spaces, peaceful environments, and communities.
- Young people are taking action to eliminate all forms of violence.

Affirming our belief that the unique perspective, creativity, energy and other assets which young people possess are essential elements of societal change, technological innovation and development, making them invaluable assets and partners in development and not problems to be solved.[xxii]

Strategic Objectives:

- Create safe spaces, peaceful communities, and environments.
- Promote a culture of peace in youth spaces and environments.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Create safe spaces and peaceful communities by:**
   - Developing more evidence-based citizen security initiatives.
   - Incorporating peacebuilding outcomes into development initiatives, such as poverty reduction programmes and education sector interventions.
   - Accentuating diversion programmes for preventative and rehabilitative juvenile justice.
   - Supporting peacebuilding and cohesion initiatives that promote youth partnerships, especially those that offer and encourage safe spaces for advocacy and civil society partnerships.
   - Enhancing the capacity of youth-led organisations and youth development agencies to promote and practice the public health model and social-ecological approaches to violence prevention.
   - Providing training in youth development work to professionals within the juvenile justice space, including the police and those involved in youth development of successfully engaging and working with young people at-risk of, or currently engaged with, gangs and other antisocial behaviours.
   - Providing training in conflict resolution techniques and non-violent communication.
   - Supporting youth advocacy and action on school-based violence.
   - Enhancing the capacity of youth-led organisations to address cyber-bullying.
   - Integrating violence prevention measures in the education system at all levels, utilising evidence-based social-ecological models.
   - Developing a network of trained peacebuilders.
   - Utilising the services of influencers and role models to implement a comprehensive “Peace Campaign” across all communities and sectors in Trinidad and Tobago.

- Promoting peace education within learning environments, community, and virtual spaces.
- Promoting youth partnerships for peace through initiatives that meet the mandate of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth Partnership for Peace and Security.

2. **Accelerate initiatives to promote gender-based violence awareness among young men and young women:**

"Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella term for any kind of discrimination or harmful behaviour which is directed against a person based on his or her (real or perceived) gender or sexual orientation. GBV may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or socio-cultural. Its root causes need to be understood in the context of gender norms, values and beliefs which support unequal hierarchies of power between women and men but also among men and women. Gender-based violence is a global issue. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the number of women and girls affected by this problem are staggering. Data provided by the WHO from 2013 stated, one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some other way – most often by someone she knows. Data from the 2014 report revealed, one in five women is sexually abused as a child. The different manifestations of gender-based violence negatively impact young people in several ways, including as victims, perpetrators, or collaborators. Gender-based violence is therefore a youth development issue. The interventions below are either adapted from the National Policy on Gender and Development (Green Paper) or are in synchronicity with its intent:

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with key stakeholders to support youth-led initiatives against Gender-based violence by:

- Creating safe environments where young people can explore the effects of gender-based violence on them and their peers.
- Providing opportunities for young people to improve their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of gender-based violence and to become agents of change in the prevention of GBV.
- Empowering young men and women to exercise their right to be valued and treated with respect and acknowledge their responsibility to value and respect others.
- Providing youth development practitioners, educators, social workers, police officers in formal and non-formal settings, with information, skills, and tools for working with young people towards the prevention of GBV.
- Promoting equality and mutual respect between women and men, and girls and boys within the private and public spheres, as a means of curbing gender-based violence.
- Facilitating youth participation in conducting public education to improve understanding of gender-based violence including domestic violence, incest, child sexual abuse, rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution and human trafficking, including legal rights, access to redress and support services.
- Facilitating youth participation in developing and implementing integrated measures to prevent, treat and alleviate the incidence of gender-based violence.

- Enhancing young women's and men's understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities and improving remedies for redress.
- Empowering young men and women to exercise their right to be valued and treated with respect and acknowledge their responsibility to treat others likewise.
- Advocating for the creation of legislation, policies and awareness-raising programmes on sexual harassment that seek to prevent its incidence and provide effective redress for victims.
- Supporting the establishment of youth-friendly protocols for collaboration among health and social service agencies dealing with gender-based violence; strengthen their response capacity, ability to collect and analyse data; and facilitate research and policy development. This includes creating a centralised system for the data collection on domestic violence, incest and child abuse, and collation and analysis of relevant data to define clear intervention policies and strategies.
- Facilitating youth participation in research and analysis of new and emerging forms and circumstances of gender-based violence, including the incidence, perpetrators, and victims.
- Facilitating the development of institutionalised guidelines for the effective functioning of shelters, crisis centres and temporary safe houses for victims/survivors of domestic violence and their children, including the provision of care for boys over twelve who are often unable to be accommodated in most shelters.
- Establishing a unit in each police stations operated by gender trained officers, to ensure that victims/survivors of gender-based violence are assisted with sensitivity and care, and to increase the level and quality of reporting of sexual offences.
- Facilitating the incorporation of gender-based violence issues, sensitively and appropriately into Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programmes in primary and secondary schools; strengthen School Child Support Services; train social workers and selected teachers in each school to recognise and deal with such cases. This will help reduce and effectively address the incidence of gender-based violence against children and young persons.

3. Prioritise youth social inclusion by:

- Facilitating a process of rigorous assessment and certification for gender equality within workplaces, using the *'Economic Dividends for Gender Equality'* (EDGE) certification.
- Establishing similar benchmarks and standards for assessing youth inclusion and engagement in decision making processes.
- Supporting policies and training for persons delivering youth services within the education, health, and private sectors to promote environments of non-discrimination
- Accelerating policies and appropriate legislation (apart from National Youth Policies) that mandate the inclusion of young people of every creed, race, ethnicity, educational background, geographical location and political affiliation in development processes (examples can include support for the creation of National Disability Policies and implementation of Convention 1982 on PLWD).

- Engaging the appropriate representative organisations for persons living with disabilities to ensure the policy interventions included in the *'National Policy for Persons with Disability'* are integrated into all youth development interventions.
- Promoting the enhanced visibility, understanding and celebration of the contributions of under-represented and excluded groups, especially in non-traditional spaces (e.g. persons living with disabilities, migrant communities, young women)
- Promoting evidence-based and community-based approaches which encourage the community involvement in youth development (e.g., Communities, Families and Youth Resilience (CFYR) approach to crime and violence, '*Community-based Rehabilitative Approach'* to service provision for YPLWDs)
- Establishing mechanisms and processes to enhance the representativeness, impact and inclusion of youth, and all categories and identities of youth, across all development sectors.
- Facilitating the institutional strengthening of organisations and agencies focused on promoting the rights of under-represented youth.
- Facilitating the inclusion of youth considerations and priorities in infrastructural projects (as skilled contributors and beneficiaries/users). These can include inclusive building designs for public buildings, schools, urban development, and sport/art facilities
- Integrating social inclusion indicators and benchmarks in policy and development processes.

4. **Prioritise social protection measures especially for young people living in difficult and challenging circumstances by:**
   - Providing appropriate support to homeless young people without compromising their dignity.
   - Facilitating the provision of social protection to young persons involved in the informal sector to sustain their livelihoods.

6.5 Pillar 5: Accentuating holistic youth health and wellbeing.

Outcomes:

- Young people are practising healthy lifestyles.
- Young people are accessing holistic youth-friendly health services.
- Healthy youth population in the prevention, treatment and care with supporting health services such as mental health, reproductive health and infectious diseases.

Strategic Objective

- Promote healthy lifestyles and youth wellbeing

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Enhance youth-responsive health services by:**
   - Accelerating the provision of training and the establishment of standards for counsellors, child psychologists, coaches, and other professionals within the Mental Health field that work with youth.

- Supporting the training of teachers, community members (such as barbers, shopkeepers, hairdressers) and young men and women on how to promote positive mental health in the classrooms and communities through mindfulness, self-care, safe spaces for expression, conflict resolution, anger management, positive communication, work-life balance and exercise.
- Supporting health care workers to be responsive to diverse youth needs.
- Supporting initiatives and policies which encourage physical activity, nutrition and minimises risk factors related to youth obesity and diabetes (e.g. Sugar Taxes).
- Supporting preventative health care measures and healthy decision making, which promote healthy lifestyles and inclusive youth access to holistic youth-responsive health services.
- Leveraging digital technologies to support Baseboard Management Controllers' (BMCs') remote access to mental health support and treatment to bridge the demand-capacity gap or increased access to support through apps.
- Supporting access to comprehensive sexuality education for young men, and young women.
- Supporting health promotion and education service initiatives.
- Engaging young people in the development of policies and strategies to identify and lower risky behaviours of youth.
- Addressing specific areas, for example HIV/AIDS, substance abuse/addiction, reproductive health, and mental health.

2. **Accentuate positive parenting by:**
   - Increasing training opportunities for parents and soon to be parents on the principles of positive parenting.
   - Creating community awareness of the responsibility of parents and caregivers under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
   - Creating awareness of the responsibility of parents and caregivers under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

6.6 Pillar 6: Emphasising youth contributions to rural transformation, agricultural production, and food security.

Outcomes:

- Young people are actively participating in rural transformation.
- Young people's participation in agricultural production is prioritised and incentivised across the value chain.

The future of agriculture and rural development depends on the young generation. Throughout the world, however, being young and living in rural areas equals a twofold challenge. A growing number of donors recognize that empowering the young for a sustainable rural space is key to sustainable development and to achieve the next level of SDGs. Young people are at the heart of

the future of agriculture, food production and rural development. Still, inclusive strategies are required to help make agriculture and rural livelihoods more attractive for them[xxiii]

Strategic Objectives:

- Accentuate youth contributions to rural transformation.
- Emphasise youth participation in agricultural production.
- Enhance youth contribution to food security.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Accentuate youth contribution to rural transformation by:**
   - Engaging young people in the development of policies and strategies to address the impact of climate change and food insecurity.
   - Facilitating development and implementation of modern technology in agriculture among youth leaders.
   - Engaging young people and youth-led organisations in the development of a Public Spaces Food Initiative.
   - Establishing a national school-based '*Home Garden"* initiative. This initiative will encourage children and young people in primary and secondary schools to acquire knowledge and skills on new approaches and techniques in agriculture production.
   - Encouraging young people to undertake research which positively impacts the agriculture and food production value chain.
   - Providing rural youth with the skills and resources needed to flourish as both agriculture and non-agriculture-based entrepreneurs.
   - Developing and implementing policies and programmes to facilitate entrepreneurial farming among rural youth.
   - Implementing holistic programmes to improve the cognitive and non-cognitive skills of rural youth who may have underperformed in traditional learning environments.
   - Providing special incentives to accelerate young entrepreneurs' participation across the food production value chain.
   - Creating opportunities for employment in the Blue economy and enhance youth contribution to the sustainable use of marine resources.

2. **Integrate youth issues and priorities in rural development projects by:**
   - Facilitating the mainstreaming and operationalisation of youth issues in rural development projects.
   - Integrating youth-disaggregated data in the results framework of rural development projects and include youth-specific indicators.
   - Facilitating youth advocacy on rural development policy at the community and national levels.
   - Facilitating active youth participation in policy debates on rural transformation.
   - Facilitating inclusive and active youth participation in project design, implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation of rural development and transformation processes

6.7 Pillar 7: Supporting youth action on climate change, environmental sustainability, and climate justice.

Outcome:

- Young people are co-creating climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable communities.

We, the collective youth voice, speak as one for the wellbeing of all. We stand firm in our resolve towards addressing the climate change crisis through the imperative course of action as detailed above in the demands of the global youth constituency[xxiv]

Strategic Objectives:

- Facilitate youth contribution to environmental sustainability.
- Support youth action on climate change and climate justice.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Support youth action on climate change by:**
   - Enhancing the capacity of youth-led organisations to take affirmative action on climate change and environmental sustainability.
   - Facilitating youth-led initiatives to create awareness on issues related to climate change, climate justice and environmental sustainability.
   - Facilitating youth-led actions and innovations to create climate-resilient communities.
   - Encouraging youth-led disaster mitigation initiatives and youth participation in post-disaster relief efforts.
   - Assisting youth-friendly psychosocial and livelihood support in post-disaster environments and circumstances.
   - Developing environmentally friendly policies and practices that are concerning to current and future generations of youth through participatory processes (energy efficiency, water security, plastic use, sustainable farming, and environmentally sustainable infrastructure).
   - Enhancing the capacity of young people and youth-led organisations to take affirmative action on climate change and environmental sustainability.
   - Creating opportunities for sustained and transparent dialogue - at all levels - between youth and decision makers so that youth ideas are both heard and implemented.
   - Engaging youth from a diverse array of backgrounds to deliver intergenerational input on national and sectoral policies.
   - Encouraging young people from diverse social backgrounds and identities to participate in climate change decision making by increasing public access to important key events, especially for historically underserved communities and vulnerable populations.

- Encouraging and supporting wherever necessary, existing institutions that facilitate formal and institutional participation of young people in climate change processes, more specifically the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE).
- Prioritising youth-led initiatives to facilitate Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) dialogue at different levels of the society.
- Facilitating enhanced youth participation in and contributions to *"sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem."*

6.8 Pillar 8: Creating an enabling environment for positive youth development in Trinidad and Tobago.

Outcomes:

- The youth development sector is professionalised.
- Youth development priorities are mainstreamed across all development sectors.

Strategic Objectives:

- Support the institutional strengthening of relevant youth development agencies and institutions.
- Develop and implement sustainable funding arrangements for youth development.
- Enact legislation and policies to facilitate positive youth development.
- Facilitate the mainstreaming of youth priorities across all development sectors.

Strategic Youth Development Interventions

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will collaborate with strategic partners to: -

1. **Facilitate the institutional strengthening of youth development agencies and Trinidad and Tobago's youth data eco-system by**:
   - Enhancing the capacity of Public sector agencies, including the Tobago House of Assembly, municipalities, and other local government bodies to accelerate the implementation of evidence-based, youth-centric, gender-responsive, intersectional youth policies and programmes.
   - Creating a functional system for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of age- and sex-disaggregated youth data.
   - Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation systems to assess and evaluate policy and programme impact and outcomes for young people.
   - Updating the national youth development knowledge base through continuous research and publication of findings. Such research initiatives should generate practice-oriented knowledge to create a repository of solutions applicable to the Trinidad and Tobago and Caribbean context.
   - Implementing a Trinidad and Tobago Youth Development Index.
   - Supporting the design of an accessible, searchable crowd-sourced database of youth services – voluntary, work-related, skills, etc. and youth data.

2. **Facilitate the transition to digital youth work by:**
   - Developing a common working understanding of the concept of digital youth work.
   - Enhancing youth workers understanding of the importance of digital youth work and their ability to manage digital issues in their work.
   - Embracing technological developments in the youth workspace and assisting young people in developing the competencies, and courage to shape digital technologies and society actively.
   - Engaging young people and youth-led organisations in developing a strategic plan to guide the development of digital youth work and the resourcing of digital youth work as an integral part of the youth development strategy.
   - Facilitating the training of youth workers to support the development of innovative digital youth work methodology, logistics, and devices/technologies to be used working with young people.
   - Incorporating digital youth work into youth worker training, and the proposed national youth work occupational standards and youth worker competence standards.
   - Ensuring that digital youth work incorporates an inclusive approach, recognising the barriers to participation in digital engagement, by using technology and pedagogical practices to increase access and minimising any obstacles to young people's active participation.
   - Ensuring that the model of digital youth work utilised respects the safety and privacy of all young people, by equipping both youth workers and young people with the necessary competencies to safeguard the rights of young people in the virtual space.
   - Ensuring the development of digital youth work is evidence-based and that quality assurance systems should be developed for evaluating its impact, reach and effectiveness.
   - Supporting continuous academic research on young people's digital consumption and cultures to ensure youth work is meeting the needs of young people in the digital age and space.
   - Facilitating knowledge exchange on digital youth work and young people's digital cultures on a regional and international level.
   - Facilitating cross-sectoral knowledge sharing to promote innovation in digital youth work.

3. **Celebrate youth contributions to Trinidad and Tobago post-independence development by:**
   - Declaring the year 2022 (60th anniversary of political independence) as a year of focus on and celebration of Trinidad and Tobago youth.
   - Facilitating a series of research conferences, expositions, and community conversations to emphasise the role of youth in development.
   - Commissioning the publication of a history of the youth movement in Trinidad and Tobago to document and accentuate young people's contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's development in the post-independence era.

4. **Promote a culture of professionalisation in youth work by:**
   - Taking action to facilitate the professionalisation of youth development work
   - Enhancing the youth development knowledge base.
   - Providing opportunities for youth development practitioners and academics to share their research on youth development in Trinidad and Tobago, thereby contributing to enhancing the practice of youth development practice.
   - Establishing a *'National Youth Development Institute,'* to facilitate the professional development of youth development practitioners.
   - Facilitating the participation of youth development practitioners at appropriate multi-sectoral regional youth workshops, conferences, exchanges, and seminars to foster a culture of positive youth development and youth mainstreaming.
   - Supporting the establishment of a *'National Youth Workers Association'.*
   - Accelerating the development and implementation of national youth work occupational standards, youth worker competence standards, and code of ethics for youth development work practitioners.
   - Establishing a system of recognition to celebrate the accomplishments and excellence in service for youth development practitioners.

5. **Promote intergenerational partnerships by:**
   - Enhancing the capacity of public officials understanding of and working collaboratively with Millennials and young persons from Generation Z.
   - Emphasising the significance of intergenerational partnerships within the public sector.
   - Accentuating intergenerational partnerships that promote co-leadership learning and practice.

6. **Empower youth-led and youth-focused organisations by:**
   - Providing technical and resource support to youth-led and youth-focused organisations, especially those working in niche/emerging areas or working to empower underrepresented young people or youth living in challenging circumstances and environments.
   - Strengthening youth-focused organisations to enhance accountability and organisational sustainability.
   - Supporting youth organisations to develop models and options for securing their financial independence through mechanisms such as social enterprises.
   - Enhancing the capacity of youth-led and youth-focused agencies to develop and implement youth policies, programmes and strategies that prioritise active and inclusive participation of under-represented youth voices (indigenous, PLWD, rural, youth on the block/unattached, youth in conflict with the law, young youth/children, etc.).

7. **Implement Youth Mainstreaming in Development Initiative by:**
   - Developing and implementing a national youth mainstreaming strategy.
   - Enhancing the capacity of key youth development stakeholders to integrate positive youth development principles across all sectors.

- Establishing a team of local technical experts to support the national *'Youth Mainstreaming Initiative'*.
- Exploring opportunities to celebrate institutions which have successfully mainstreamed youth.
- Developing mechanisms to support learning through online courses or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on youth mainstreaming and post graduate programmes targeting professionals on integrated approaches to youth development.

6.9 Cross-Cutting Thematic area

There is one cross-cutting theme for the policy, which is gender equality and equity.

This National Youth Policy is grounded in a rights-based paradigm and embraces the use of gender-sensitive approaches in the implementation of the National Youth Policy, the Strategic Youth Development Action Plan, and other current and emerging plans for youth development in Trinidad and Tobago to achieve the following objectives:
Objective 1: To promote the participation of young women and men in decision-making processes on the elimination of barriers that limit their full participation in society.

Objective 2: Develop research and disseminate information on the differential impact of policy on youth and gender.

Objective 3: Promote the leadership of young women and girls in decision-making.

More specifically, the NYPTT prioritises the following Gender-responsive interventions:

- The disaggregation of youth data by sex and other cross-cutting themes, to inform gender-aware policymaking, planning and programming for the diverse youth population.
- Integration of gender equity performance indicators in decision-making, distribution of public funds, and investments in youth programming.
- Promotion of gender-awareness in youth internship, entrepreneurship and apprenticeship initiatives and incentives to encourage private sector participation, including gender-specific interventions and targets to meet the needs and interests of young males and females.
- Development of gender-aware approaches to addressing the situation of young males and females at risk through early identification and social intervention, and intensive capacity building in gender awareness of all persons who interact with children and youth, especially through institutionalised care.
- Promotion of gender sensitivity in the design of community recreational and sports facilities to facilitate gender equity and the increased participation of young women.
- Supporting young men's and women's equitable access to ICTs and other community resources that empower them to achieve their full potential and shape productive communities.

- Promoting positive attitudes, behaviours, and social influences, especially through popular culture, that break gender stereotypes and promote the equitable aspirations and advancement of young men and women.
- Promote gender-sensitive approaches in the development and implementation of youth-oriented skills training and continuing education programmes, to remove gender bias in curricula, course content, access, and delivery, and ensure the full and equal participation of young men and women.
- Ensuring the safety of women and men within youth development spaces, especially offices, spaces and service sites for youth work.
- Supporting training for all youth development workers and leaders of youth-led organisations on gender equality.
- Enhancing the capacity of youth development workers and youth-led organisations to create evidence-based mechanisms for analysing the impact of gender in programmes and projects.
- Establishing a multi-sectorial youth development technical working group to monitor and evaluate the effective delivery of programmes and resources.
- Supporting youth-led women's rights and community-based organisations with a focus on promoting the fundamental human rights of women and women's leadership.
- Developing leadership training programmes founded on principles of gender equality for young women that includes peer-to-peer learning models.

6.10 Positive Youth Development Outcomes for Trinidad and Tobago

Operationalisation of the eight strategic youth development priorities or **"Pillars"** and the cross-cutting thematic area of gender equality and equity will result in several measurable positive youth development outcomes. These youth development outcomes are critical success factors for an enhanced youth development ecology.

Youth Development Pillars	Positive Youth Development Outcomes
Pillar 1	Youth economic participation is prioritised and incentivised.
Pillar 2	Young men and women are active participants in the transformation of learning environments. Young people demonstrate social competence and resilience.
Pillar 3	Young people are engaged as co-creators in governance and development processes. Functional youth-led organisations and networks. Active youth participation in civic and democratic processes.
Pillar 4	Young people are co-creators and beneficiaries of safe spaces, peaceful environments, and communities. Young people are taking action to eliminate all forms of violence.

Youth Development Pillars	Positive Youth Development Outcomes
Pillar 5	Young people are practising healthy lifestyles. Young people are accessing holistic youth-friendly health services. Healthy youth population in the prevention, treatment and care with supporting health services such as mental health, reproductive health and infectious diseases.
Pillar 6	Young people are actively participating in rural transformation. Young people's participation in agricultural production is prioritised and incentivised across the value chain.
Pillar 7	Young people are co-creating climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable communities.
Pillar 8	The youth development sector is professionalised. Youth development priorities are mainstreamed across all development sectors
Cross-cutting theme	Gender equality and equity are mainstreamed across all policies and programmes.

7.0 Implementation of the National Youth Policy

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago assumes responsibility for facilitating and coordinating the implementation of this National Youth Policy. An integrated approach to deliver on the positive youth development outcomes will be pursued. This will necessitate the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago acting as facilitator, collaborator, and coordinator of this integrated and collaborative approach, involving the active engagement of key stakeholders and partners, including the Tobago House of Assembly, Local Government bodies, youth networks, private sector partners, non-government organisations, faith and community-based organisations, among others, in the design, implementation and evaluation processes. The role of the local government agencies is particularly important given their emerging expanded responsibilities for the delivery of services and community-based interventions as part of the local government reform initiative. Commensurate with the concept of integrated policy development and shared ownership, youth mainstreaming is strongly recommended to facilitate effective implementation and robust monitoring of the youth policy document instrument.

7.1 Resource Mobilisation Strategy

Successful implementation of this new national youth policy requires the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, collaborating with key development partners to facilitate appropriate financial investments in and securing the necessary technical assistance to support the positive youth development agenda succinctly articulated in this policy.

Several investment options, including the establishment of a Youth Development Investment Fund, will be considered.

7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)

The Monitoring and Evaluation strategy is a vital component of the policy development process. The M&E strategy has several critical functions in translating policy priorities into results. The approach assists with the systematic tracking of programme implementation and outputs, monitoring compliance and assessing effectiveness, quality, relevance, and impact. It also sets the standards and criteria for project modification. It also provides vital support for decision-making on matters related to resource allocation and workforce planning. Monitoring and evaluation strategies are also useful tools to support the efficient use of resources and objectively assess results (Gage and Dunn, 2009; Frankel and Gage, 2007).

Additionally, when properly executed M&E strategies provide excellent opportunities to strengthen existing and build new strategic partnerships. This National Youth Policy will be actualised with a Strategic Action Plan with targeted youth development outcomes and indicators. The following is an outline of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the National Youth Policy, which will be fully expounded upon in the accompanying Strategic Action Plan:

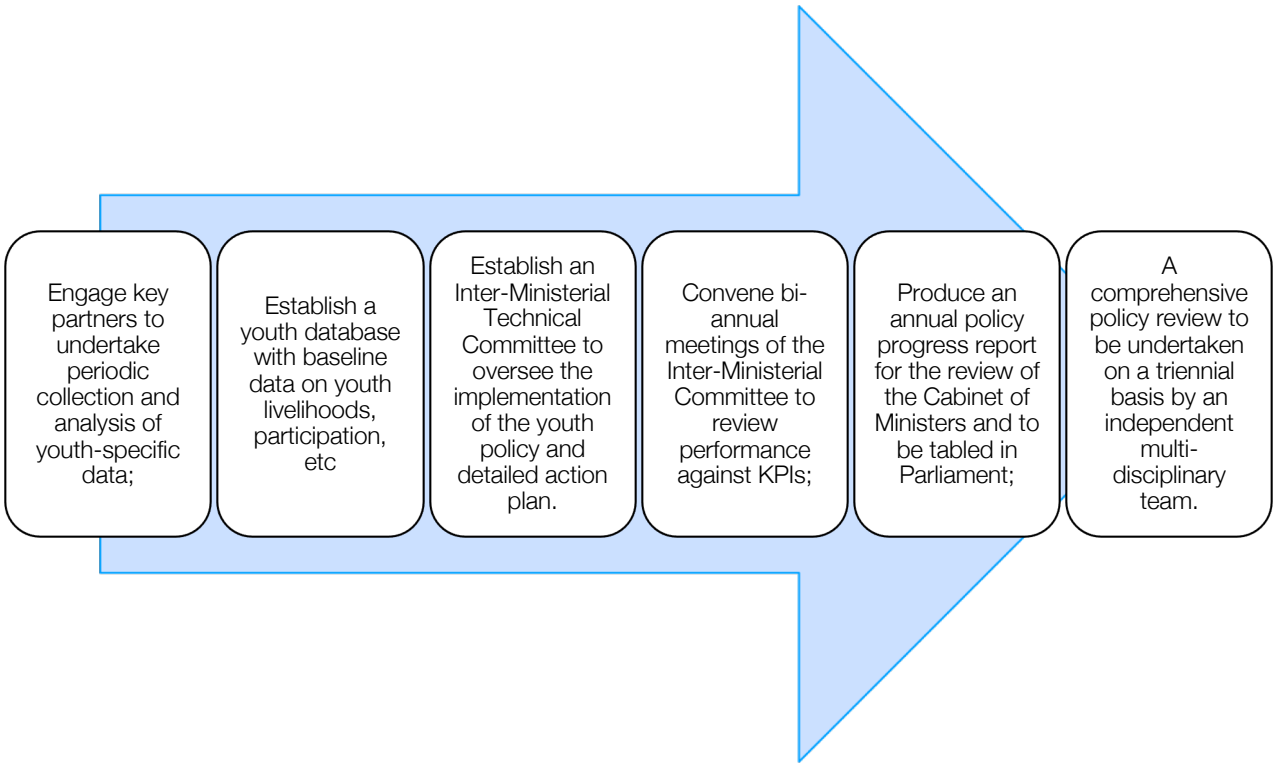

Figure 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The efficacy and effectiveness of the proposed monitoring and evaluation strategy will be accentuated by utilising the following strategies:

1. Building the capacity of the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service to function effectively in results-based management context;
2. Enhance the capacity of youth leaders to undertake policy and programme evaluation and assessments;
3. Accentuate the integration of modern Management Information Systems (MIS) and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in M&E processes;
4. Develop a working partnership with the National Statistical agency;
5. Strengthen the research capacity of the Ministry of Youth Development and National Service.

A complete monitoring and evaluation strategy will be developed as a companion instrument to this national youth policy.

7.3 Emphasising the Economic Value of Investing in Youth

"The ways in which the policy addresses the challenges and potential of young people will influence current social and economic conditions and the well- being and livelihood of future generations.[3]"

During the research and consultative phases of this national youth policy process, the dispersed nature of public sector investments in the youth development sector was lamented. This discussion on public sector investments in the youth development sector is taking place across the region. Instructively, both the World Bank Country Study on Youth Development in the Caribbean (2003) and the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development's Report (2010) included econometric analyses emphasising the economic value of timely investments in the youth development sector. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will consider securing technical assistance from the Caribbean Development Bank, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) or the Commonwealth Secretariat to conduct an econometric analysis of Trinidad and Tobago's investment in the youth development sector to assess the real economic value of those investments.

[3]World Programme of Action of Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

8.0 Conclusion

This National Youth Policy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a dynamic instrument grounded in a rights-based approach. It embraces a positive youth development paradigm and is intended to positively impact the youth development landscape and facilitate the empowerment of the diverse Trinidad and Tobago youth population. Fundamentally, this policy re-affirms the concept of youth development as a sustainable development imperative and emphasises the role and value of young people as strategic partners in and co-creators of Trinidad and Tobago's sustainable development, particularly the emerging post COVID-19 recovery strategy.

Eight critical success factors are emphasised to achieve effective implementation of this revised youth policy. These include:

1. Creating a supportive Youth Policy Environment through political support.
2. Emphasising the timeliness, relevance and evidence-based nature of programmes and projects.
3. Fostering of strategic partnerships and collaborative networks.
4. Prioritising inclusive and active youth participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programmes.
5. Actualising a fit-for-purpose sustainable resourcing strategy.
6. Accentuating organised youth representation and advocacy.
7. Developing a professionalised youth development culture.
8. Developing a functional, results-based monitoring and evaluation framework.

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